

Instructions for the POSIT Screening Tool

The Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) is a brief screening tool designed for adolescents 12 through 18 years of age to identify problems requiring an in-depth assessment and potentially a need for treatment.

The POSIT has a substance abuse area that will be utilized as the substance abuse screening tool for adolescents aged 12 – 18. Should the worker have any suspicion that substance abuse is a significant problem area for a child younger than 12, the screen should certainly be given at the worker's discretion.

The screen should be filled out by the adolescent. If reading the instrument is a problem, the questions can be read to the adolescent. The results will need to be reviewed by the worker on the case. There may be times when the adolescent is not entirely truthful in responding to the questions. In these cases, the worker should apply the knowledge gained through working with the child and family and provide correct responses.

Scoring of the instrument is simple. If an adolescent responds positively to even one question, they are considered at moderate risk for having a significant substance abuse problem and should be referred to the local area mental health programme for evaluation.